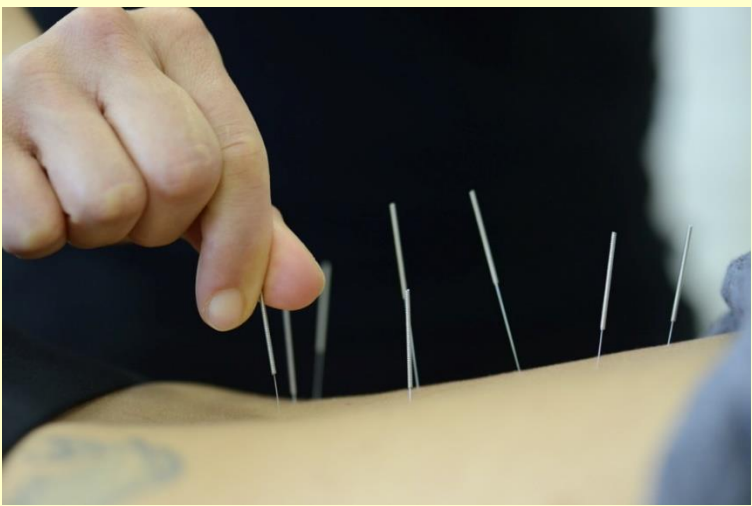




Patient Demographics at an Urban Acupuncture Teaching Clinic

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ABSTRACT:

The primary aim of our study was to describe the demographic characteristics of acupuncture patients in an urban teaching clinic and the diagnoses of those patients. The demographics of those seeking acupuncture treatments at the University of Bridgeport Acupuncture Institute clinic are primarily female, mostly Caucasian, with an average age of 55.7 years. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) patient demographics at an urban teaching clinic match those in other settings around the world.

Methods

This study was a retrospective review of the electronic health records (EHRs) of patients who had received at least one session of acupuncture at the UB Acupuncture Clinics during one academic year (2 semesters). We performed an electronic chart review at the University of Bridgeport Acupuncture Institute teaching clinic, part of the “UB Clinics” in Bridgeport, CT. Information that existed in automatically extractable form was collected in a predefined Excel spreadsheet. Unidentified patient data of those who had received acupuncture (as identified as being billed with the CPT code 97810) were extracted from the Electronic health Record (EHR). Specifically, patient ID numbers, gender, age, self-identified race information and ICD10 diagnoses were extracted to an Excel spreadsheet. This information existed in automatically extractable form due to the use of an electronic health record (EHR). After extraction, the data was analyzed for demographic and diagnostic groupings. The primary diagnoses (ICD 10 Codes) were based on the patient’s history, clinical examination and previously diagnosed diseases. All ICD 10 codes were selected by the student interns and verified by the supervising clinicians. The Senior Clinical Administrator for the UB Clinics, who was not involved in this study, oversaw the data extraction. All extracted data from the EHRs database was done by the company who provides the EHR system (CGM).

Outcomes

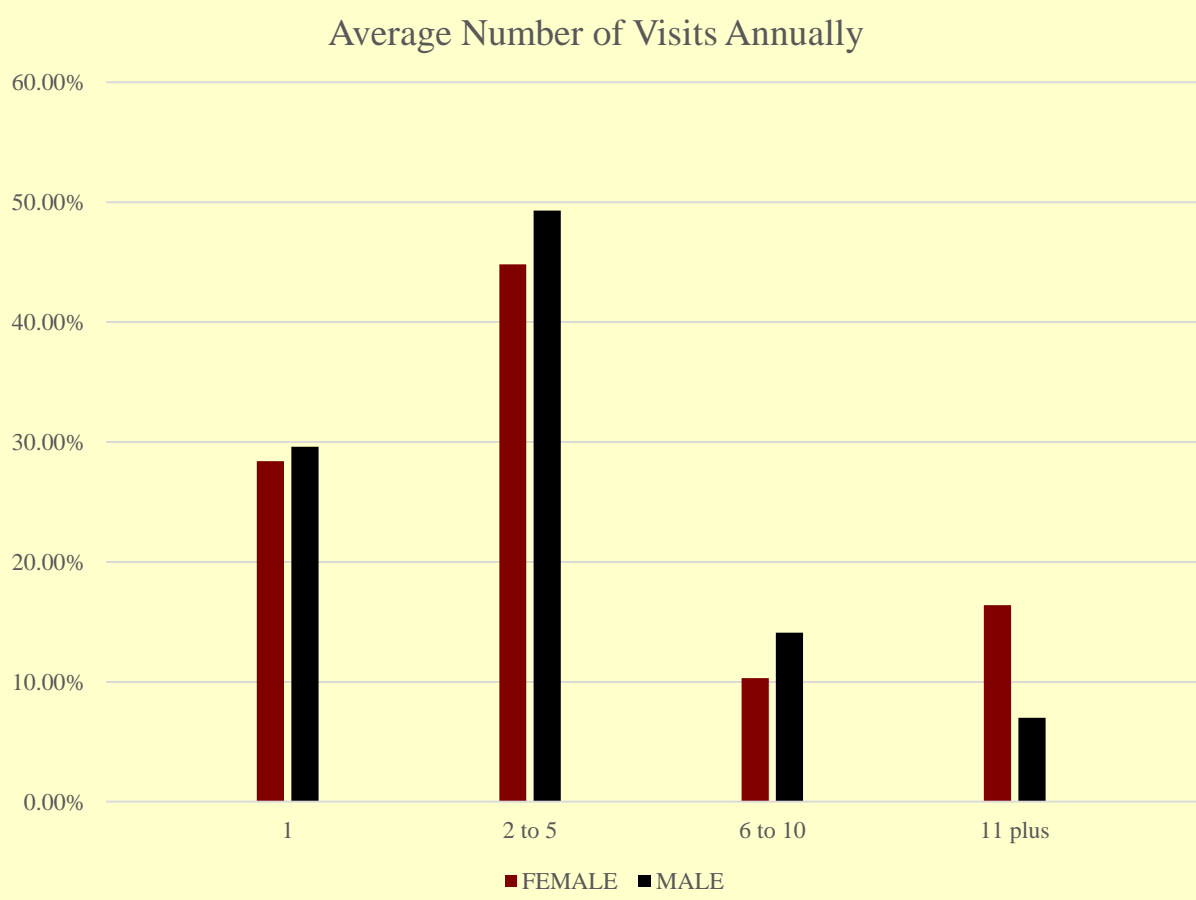
Study Location	% Female	% Male
UB	73	27
Other US Studies (1-4)	70	30
UK (8)	74	26
Korea (5, 6)	57	43

Ages	UB Clinics	USA	UK	Korea
Under 21	1.5			
21-40	16.9	19.2	19.5	25.4
41-50	16.5	21.7	22.4	25.9
51-60	24.6	26.5	28.7	27.6
61-80	36.3	28.9	26.2	19.4
over 80 years	4.2	3.7	3.2	1.7
AVERAGE	55.7	42.5	51	52.0

UB Clinics Acupuncture Patients Self-Identified Race	%
Asian	5.6
African American	7.4
Caucasian/non-Latino	65.9
Other	19.9

Category of Diagnosis	Percentage (%)
MUSCULOSKELETAL DIAGNOSES	49.9
GENERAL WELLNESS	12.9
NERVOUS SYSTEM DISORDERS	8.7
MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL DISEASES	6.4
DIGESTIVE DISORDERS/illnesses	6.3
FEMALE GENITOURINARY DISEASES	4.1
Other, misc.	11.7
Total	100

Number of Visits



Discussion

The UB Clinics is a teaching clinic associated with a university situated near the Long Island Sound in the south end of Bridgeport Connecticut, an low-income urban area with a median per capita income of \$22,422. In Connecticut, many healthcare insurers cover acupuncture treatments for pain diagnoses. However, acupuncture is not covered by Medicare or Medicaid services in CT. The comparatively low cost of our acupuncture services is probably one factor in seeing patients in our teaching clinic, especially for those over 65 years of age. It is also possible that people seeking more information about acupuncture “try” the UB Clinics because it is a teaching clinic. The patients' demographic characteristics for the UB Clinics were similar to other published demographic studies of acupuncture. Namely, our patients were primarily female, mostly Caucasian, with an average age of 55.7 years. This study compares favorably with previous acupuncture studies in various treatment settings. Instructors teaching acupuncture in the US need to be sure student interns are prepared to treat patients with musculoskeletal pain and neurological disorders with special emphasis on those over 50 years of age. This study compares favorably with previous acupuncture studies in various treatment settings.

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Conclusions:

The demographics of those seeking acupuncture treatments at the University of Bridgeport Acupuncture Institute clinic are primarily female, mostly Caucasian, with an average age of 55.7 years. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) patient demographics at an urban teaching clinic match those in other settings around the world.

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